

### *Claim Amendments*

1-6. (canceled)

7. (canceled)

8. (cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 15, the control card and the at least one forwarding card are configured to maintain a namespace to allow registration of the control card and the at least one forwarding card.

10. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 15, the control card is configured to redirect packets according to a scope of the second portion of the functionality of the control plane protocol.

11.-14. (cancelled)

15. (Previously Presented) A system, comprising:

a control card configured to implement at least a first portion of functionality of a control plane protocol;

at least one forwarding card configured to implement a second portion of the functionality of the control plane protocol that is separate and distinct from the first portion of the functionality; and

a backplane configured to couple the control card to the at least one forwarding card and to provide connectivity between the control card and the forwarding card;

wherein:

each of the control card and the at least one forwarding card is configured discover other cards of the control card and the at least one forwarding card; and

each of the control card and the at least one forwarding card is configured to obtain information about the functionality of the control plane protocol and to setup connections

among the functionality of the control plane protocol implemented on the control card and the at least one forwarding card such that the functionality implemented on the other cards is presented to the functionality implemented on the card as a process running on the card.

16-18. (canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) A method of distributing processing in a network device, comprising:

defining a controller control plane protocol module and at least one worker control plane protocol module, wherein the controller control plane protocol module implements at least a first portion of functionality of a control plane protocol on a control card , and wherein the worker control plane protocol module implements a second portion of the control plane protocol that is separate and distinct from the first portion of the functionality on at least one forwarding card; and

establishing communication among the controller control plane protocol module and the at least one worker control plane protocol module such that for each of the control plane protocol module and the at least one worker control plane protocol module, an interface for the other modules is presented to the module as a process running on the corresponding card.

20.-21. (cancelled)

22. (Previously Presented) An article of machine readable instructions that, when executed, cause the machine to:

define a controller control plane protocol module and at least one worker control plane protocol module, wherein the controller control plane protocol module implements at least a first portion of functionality of a control plane protocol on a control card , and wherein the worker control plane protocol module implements a second portion of the control plane protocol that is separate and distinct from the first portion of the functionality on at least one forwarding card; and

establishing communication among the controller control plane protocol module and the at least one worker control plane protocol module such that for each of the control plane protocol module and the at least one worker control plane protocol module, an interface for the other modules is presented to the module as a process running on the corresponding card.

23.-24. (cancelled)

25. (New) The system of claim 15, wherein each of the control card and the at least one forwarding card is configured to present an application programming interface for the functionality implemented on the other cards identical to an application programming interface the functionality implemented on the other cards would provide if implemented on the particular card.